

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 SSM-03 SSC-01  
OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-07 COME-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05  
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 AID-05 CCO-00 DHA-02  
MCT-01 SY-05 A-01 OPR-02 /103 W  
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O R 101704Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2497

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8807

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, LE

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT SAARKIS' FIRST CABINET

REF: BEIRUT 8779

1. LATE DECEMBER 9 A NEW LEBANESE CABINET WAS FORMED.

A. DR. SALIM AHMAD HUSS (OR "AL-HUSS") - PRIME MINISTER,  
MIN OF ECONOMY AND COMMERCE, MIN OF INDUSTRYYY ND PETROLEUM,  
MIN OF EDUCATION;

B. FUAD BOUTROS - VICE PRIME MINISTER, MIN OF FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS, MIN OF DEFENSE;

C. DR SALAH SALAM - MIN OF INTERIOR, MIN OF HOUSING AND  
COOPERATIVES;

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D. DR IBRAHIM CHEAITO - MINISTER OF HEALTH, MIN OF WATER RESOURCES AND ELECTRICITY;

E. AMINE BIZRI - MIN OF TRANSPORTATION, MIN OF TOURISM;

F. MICHEL DOUMIT - MIN OF PLANNING;

G. DR ASSAD RIZK - MIN OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS, MIN OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, MIN OF AGRICULTURE;

H. FARID RAPHAEL - MIN OF JUSTICE, MIN OF FINANCE, MIN OF COMMUNICATIONS.

2. BASIC BIO DATA AS FOLLOWS:

A. SALIM AHMAD HUSS: (REFTEL)

B. FUAD BOUTROS: BORN 1920 IN BEIRUT. GREEK ORTHODOX. LICENSED IN LAW FROM UNIV. OF ST. JOSEPH. MIN OF EDUCATION AND PLANNING 1959-60; DEPUTY FROM BEIRUT 1960-68; MIN OF JUSTICE 1961-64; DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, MIN OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND MIN OF TOURISM, FEB-OCT 1968.

C. SALAH SALMAN: BORN 1936 IN BEIRUT, DRUZE.. STUDIED MEDICINE AT AUB AND AT JOHNS HOPKINS. PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE AT AUB; MIN OF HEALTH 1970.

D. IBRAHIM CHEAITO: BORN 1930 IN TIRI, SOUTH LEBANON. SHIITE. STUDIED MEDICINE AT THE UNIV OF CAIRO. DEPUTY FROM BINT JBAYL 1968.

E. AMINE BIZRI: BORN 1925 IN SIDON. SUNNI. ARCHITECT AND CITY PLANNER, BOTH IN LEBANON AND A NUMBER OF ARAB COUNTRIES.

F. MICHEL DOUMIT: BORN 1925 IN DBAYE. MARONITE. STUDIED AT UNIV OF ST. JOSEPH. ENGINEER AND SUCCESSFUL SELF-MADE BUSINESSMAN; PART OWNER OF ESSO FERTILIZER.

G. ASSAD RIZK: BORN 1931 IN BEIRUT. GREEK CATHOLIC. CONFIDENTIAL

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STUDIED MEDICINE AAT UNIV OF ST. JOSEPH AND PARIS. PRACTICING SURGEON.

H. FARID RAPHAEL: BORN 1931 IN KESROUAN. MARONITE. STUDIED AT UNIV OF ST. JOSEPH AND STUDIED BANKING IN FRANCE. DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE BANQUE LIBANO-FRANCAISE.

3. NEXT STEPS. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS IS YET TO BE FORMALLY

INSTALLED IN OFFICE, BUT HELD AT FIRST INFORMAL MEETING PPE-SIDED BY SARKIS IMMEDIATELY AFTER ANNOUNCEMENT EVENING OF DEC 9. CABINET AND A "MINISTERIAL STATEMENT" PREPARED BY HUSS AND BOURTOS MAY BE PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT AS EARLY AS DEC 16. A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE IS EXPECTED WITHOUT DIFFICULTY.

4. SARKIS CHARGES CABINET. IN TRADITIONAL SPEECH TO CABINET, SARKIS STRESSED THAT "WE ARE ALL SONS OF LEBANON, CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS, AND NOTHING DISTINGUISHES ONE CITIZEN FROM ANOTHER, AND WARNED CABINET AGAINST INTERNAL POLITICAL MANEUVERINGS. HE OTHERWISE EMPHASIZED RECONSTRUCTION, BEGINNING WITH ARMY AND INTERIOR SECURITY FORCE, ONLY GOVERNMENT ENTITIES TO WHICH HE SPECIFICALLY REFERRED. INFORMAL CABINET MEETING WHICH FOLLOWED CONSIDERED NUMBER OF SPECIFIC TECHNICAL MATTERS, LARGELY IN FIELD OF RECONSTRUCTION AND FINANCE.

5. REACTIONS. THOSE WHO MAY HAVE HAD UNREQUITED HOPES OF PLAYING MAJOR ROLE IN FIRST SARKIS GOVERNMENT, HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT CRITICAL, NOTABLY CAMILLE CHAMOUN, WHO DESCRIBED APPOINTMENT OF HUSS AS A "VERY SERIOUS STEP." NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY STATEMENT EXPRESSED "TEMPORARY RESERVATIONS." NEVERTHELESS, PIERRE GEMAYEL APPLAUDED CABINET AS, "A TRANSITIONAL STEP TOWARDS RECONCILIATION OF THE TWO HALVES OF THE COUNTRY." JUNBLATT, TAKING A MORE AMICABLE TONE TOWARDS SARKIS THAN HE HAS EVER DONE BEFORE, SPOKE OF NECESSITY OF GIVING PRESIDENT SARKIS FREE HAND AND SPOKE APPROVINGLY OF IMPORTANCE OF "DOING AWAY WITH TRADITIONAL PRIME MINISTERS." PLO IS AVOIDING COMMENT EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT NAMING CABINET WILL FACILITATE GOL-PLO CONTACTS. AS SAFIR NOTED THAT FOUR OF THE EIGHT APPOINTEES "ARE KNOWN SHIHABISTS."

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6. CONFESSIONAL BALANCE. DESPITE NON-POLITICAL COLORATION OF THE CABINET, SARKIS DID OBSERVE AMENITIES OF TRADITIONAL CONFESSIONAL BALANCE: TWO OF THE EIGHT MEMBERS ARE SUNNITES, TWO ARE MARONITES, ONE EACH IS SHIITE, DRUZE, GREEK ORTHODOX, AND GREEK CATHOLIC.

7. COMMENT: AS ANTICIPATED, SARKIS HAS APPOINTED SMALL CABINET OF "TECHNOCRATS." NONE ARE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AND BOUTROS IS ONLY MEMBER WITH A NOTABLY PREVIOUS POLITICAL CAREER. CABINET IS HEAVILY WEIGHTED WITH EXPERIENCE IN BANKING AND BUSINESS. IT IS A RECONSTRUCTION CABINET. SARKIS HAS, AS THOSE WHO MOST WISH HIM SUCCESS HAVE URGED, APPOINTED A CABINET WHICH WILL BE PERSONALLY LOYAL TO HIM, NOTABLY HUSS AND BOUTROS, WHO ARE BOTH LONG-

TIME PERSONAL FRIENDS.

8. HAVING MADE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS IN ESTABLISHING SECURITY (BUT NOT YET IN SOUTH LEBANON, AND WITHOUT TANGIBLE SUCCESS IN COLLECTING HEAVY WEAPONS), SARKIS IS MOVING ON TO SECOND GREAT TASK, RECONSTRUCTION. CLEARLY, POLITICAL RECONCILIATION AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM MUST WAIT.

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## Message Attributes

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